

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Tuesday, March 11, when the Senate resumes consideration of S. Con. Res. 70, the concurrent resolution on the budget, there be debate only, with no amendments in order, until the Senate recesses for the party conference meetings, and that the recess time on Tuesday be charged equally against each side. We will recess at 12:30 and come back at 2:15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about S. 2736, Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Act of 2008 introduced with my colleague Senator CHARLES SCHUMER. The HUD section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program is the only program that provides capital grants to nonprofit community organizations for the development of supportive housing and rental assistance exclusively for low-income seniors. This program provides supportive services coupled with housing to allow seniors to remain safely in their homes and age in place. Access to supportive services reduces the occurrence of costly nursing home stays and helps save both seniors and the Federal Government money.

There are over 300,000 seniors living in 6,000 section 202 developments across the country. Unfortunately, the program is far from meeting the growing demand. Approximately 730,000 additional senior housing units will be needed by 2020 to address the future housing needs of low-income seniors. Currently, there are 10 seniors vying for each unit that becomes available. This leaves many seniors waiting years before finding a home. To complicate matters, we are losing older section 202 properties in exchange for high priced condominiums and apartments. As a result, many seniors currently participating in the program could end up homeless.

Congress should act now to plan appropriately for the increased demand that will exist for housing in the com-

ing years and ensure that seniors can find safe, affordable housing. Accordingly, I am pleased to join Senator SCHUMER in introducing the section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Act of 2008. Our legislation would help promote the construction of new senior housing facilities as well as preserve and improve upon existing facilities. The legislation would also support the conversion of existing facilities into assisted living facilities that provide a wide variety of additional supportive health and social services. Under current law, these processes are time consuming, bureaucratic, and far too often require waivers and special permission from HUD to complete. This legislation also provides priority consideration for our homeless seniors seeking a place to call their own. With this legislation, we hope to reduce current impediments and increase the availability of affordable and supportive housing for our nations most vulnerable seniors.

I want to thank the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging as well as the Wisconsin Association of Homes and Services for the Aging for being champions of this legislation and for working with us to develop a comprehensive bill that will help meet the growing need for senior housing in this Nation.

Senior citizens deserve to have housing that will help them maintain their independence. They do not deserve to end up homeless with no where to turn because they are stuck on long waiting lists. This Nation must do a better job at helping Americans have a place to call home during their golden years. I hope my colleagues will join me in my effort to do so.

### ANDEAN TRADE PREFERENCE ACT

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, on February 28, 2008 we ratified the Andean Trade Preference Act, ATPA. Historically, these preferences have been decisive in encouraging both development and liberalization in a key region. Renewing them is an important step in our relations with the region, but we should also be realistic, and sophisticated, in our expectations for what these preferences can accomplish. As we look at where each of the four Andean nations stands today, we see that they are at very different stages of development, politically and economically, so the preferences will impact each country differently.

Peru has made commendable strides in its economic liberalization process while remaining a trustworthy counterpart on many nontrade matters. Earlier this year we cemented our relationship through ratification of a Free Trade Agreement, FTA. As we go through the FTA implementation process, preferences are still necessary to minimize disruption to current commercial flows between the United States and Peru.

Colombia has made outstanding progress politically and economically.

During the past 6 years, Colombia's economic growth, one of the fastest in Latin America, has helped usher in a new era of unprecedented stability for that country—kidnappings, once rampant, have dropped sharply, down nearly 90 percent since 1999; and the once sky-high murder rate has plummeted to its lowest in almost 20 years. The FTA signed between our two countries includes environmental standards as well as worker protections and safeguards similar to the trade pact with Peru, which enjoyed bipartisan support.

Colombia's own private sector unions have endorsed the agreement. An extension on the Andean Trade Preference Act is crucial given that the Colombia FTA has not been ratified by the Congress, and would help leverage our considerable aid commitment, ensuring Colombia remains on its path to becoming a secure and prosperous nation.

Our trade preferences for Bolivia and Ecuador are important because both countries have elected leaders whose record and rhetoric cast serious doubt on their commitment to market-based economic policies. For this reason, it is important for the United States to maintain a strong relationship with the constructive forces in these countries. We want to encourage those who are working for economic liberalization and reforms that promote foreign investment and the creation of jobs. We want to support those who are pursuing policies that will improve social and economic development in health and education and advance the welfare for the less fortunate. It is in these countries where the effect of greater, and not lesser, engagement will yield the highest long term benefits.

The ability to benefit from trade preferences is difficult in an environment in which the rule of law is coming under severe attack. Both countries are facing challenges on this front, with weakened justice systems that struggle to uphold the law. In this regard, an environment that supports free economic exchange and accountable governance is weakened by the inability of these governments to implement the law.

Both Bolivia and Ecuador have much to gain by focusing on strengthening and depoliticizing the rule of law. Without an improvement on the legal front in these countries, the potential for these trade preferences to serve as development tools is limited.

It is my hope that 10 months from now, when we again address the issue of preferences for the Andean countries, we will be well into the implementation of FTAs with Peru and Colombia and at the same time witnessing an improved commitment in Ecuador and Bolivia to the reforms that are essential to getting the most out of trade preference legislation.

### THE MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate